DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 099 355 SP 008 660

AUTHOR Vail, Robert B.
TITLE AACTE Leadership Training Institute on Performance-Based Teacher Education.
PUB DATE Dec 74
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Performance Based Teacher Education; Performance Criteria; State Programs; *Teacher Certification; *Teacher Evaluation; Teacher Participation
IDENTIFIERS *Vermont

ABSTRACT

This speech on performance-based teacher education centers on slaying the following sacred cow: the belief that it is impossible to evaluate the performance of teachers objectively and effectively. The historical reasons for electing performance-based teacher education as a means of teacher evaluation are described. The speech lists assumptions used in the formulation of new regulations adopted by the Vermont State Board of Education. These assumptions include the beliefs that teacher education is a continuous process from early preparation until retirement, that the individual teacher must be actively involved in determining the criteria by which he or she will be evaluated and by whom, and that colleges and school districts must share the responsibility for teacher education. The speech describes Vermont's new certification procedures, which include the following components: (a) initial certification--graduates of state-approved teacher education programs who have demonstrated identified basic competencies for beginning teachers and who are recommended for certification by their college; (b) certification renewal--recommendation of teachers who have demonstrated the competencies identified; (c) inservice training programs with authorized local certification privileges; and (d) individualized self-evaluation programs at the local level. (JA)

ED 099355

AACTE Leadership Training Institute
on
PERFORMANCE-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

Boston, Massachusetts
December 9-12, 1974

Presentation by

Robert B. Vail, Director
Teacher and Continuing Education
Montpelier, Vermont 05602

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The greatest problem we have had to face in our PBTE efforts is one of attitude. Teachers, administrators, college faculty and lay people were suspicious, skeptical and dubious. PBTE was initially seen as another SDE gimmick that would only bring more stress and work for everyone.

This attitude manifested itself in many ways but can be shown symbolically in this quotation.

> "WE TRAINED HARD ... but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganized. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing; and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization."
>
> Petronius Arbiter, 210 B.C.

Any teacher today might have made this statement.

SP028660

The fact that it was said more than 2000 years ago makes one wonder about the image we create today when we attempt to reorganize some systems.

We believe we have rather successfully avoided this indictment up to this point, by appealing to the inner desire of every human being to do a competent job.

So, the heart of our message has been -- You do it -- we are not going to tell you how, what, where or when!

However, behind this idealism was a strong thread of reality and that's what I will try to tell you about.

I've been known to talk about the many sacred cows that can be found in any pasture of accountability and how we need to slaughter them. In Vermont such words have real meaning because, with the exception of ski weekends, we still have more cows than people.

Today, I'm only going to mention one sacred cow and what we are doing to try to get rid of it. This sacred cow, although only a myth, is easily identified as --

> "It is impossible to objectively and effectively evaluate the performance of teachers"

Now this cow is a real biggy; rugged, belligerent, bossy and treacherous -- it can be male or female and although only mythical, has great influence in the pasture. Not only with the other cows -- the good, productive and cooperative ones, but it has a negative effect on anyone who wants to explore the pasture of accountability.

This sacred cow seriously reduces the production level of the legitimate cows and is damaging the cost effectiveness factor of the whole operation. The farm manager has a fairly simple and efficient method of holding each real cow accountable for performing. He can measure production by the 3M method. -- Milk, manure and meat.

Of course, the farmer has some problems in the whole process too, and is held accountable in many ways himself.

Let's take a closer look at the Pasture of Accountability and relate or compare it to teacher education.

1. It is surrounded by barbed wire and well guarded by self-appointed leaders, some real, some mythical.
2. One must be careful not to irritate, antagonize or threaten the inhabitants, especially the sacred ones as they become very defensive and agressive.
3. One must be careful where one steps as he will encounter a great deal of B.S. or messy defecation. Politely called Meadow Muffins, or Pasture Patties, strategically placed.
4. There are other dangers in the pasture too, briars, thistles, woodchuck holes, rocks, snakes, wasps, etc., but the worst is the SACRED COW -- the myth that there is NO fair way to evaluate teaching performance.

So, we decided to slaughter this sacred cow by using the only legitimate weapon we owned -- certification. We haven't killed her or him yet -- NO, we are still slipping around in the pasture, occasionally getting gored and chased and frequently becoming tired and frustrated. But we think we have the S O B weakening now and on the run.

On what do we base this positive evaluation? And how did we use and how are we using such a weak weapon as certification in the destruction of this powerful myth?

Let's take the last question first. We began in 1968 by asking ourselves the following questions:

1. Does certification have any legitimate role to play in the whole area of teacher performance?

   We decided yes - it definitely does!

2. Do we believe that teacher performance <u>can</u> be fairly evaluated?

   We decided yes!

3. As the so called guardian of the public interest, should we not take the leadership role or catalyst role in making teacher education performance based?

   Again, we said yes!

4. Will teachers accept the concept that they should be held accountable and evaluated on their performance?

   Here we hesitated and our answer was -- probably not, especially if it is state mandated and certainly not, if the teachers are not involved.

So, we proceeded to rewrite our certification regulations and, with effective teacher involvement, produced a document that gave us the green light to proceed. It was adopted by the State Board of Education in 1971 and is now beginning to bring about the changes that were anticipated and some that weren't.

Our new regulations are based on the following assumptions.

1. That teacher education is a continuous process from early preparation until retirement. Pre-service and inservice can not be separated.
2. That most all teachers admit to the need for constant professional growth.
3. That the educating of teachers must be a shared responsibility; shared by the college, by the school district and by the appropriate professional organization of teachers and accountable to the public at the local level.
4. That evaluating and modifying teacher behavior is of value only if it improves learning opportunities for children.
5. That the acquisition of degrees and academic credit does little, if anything, to insure teacher competence.
6. That judgments about teacher preparation, continuing education, performance and competence for the individual should be made at the local level and not by the state agency.
7. That the Superintendent of Schools is the local educational leader and has the responsibility of playing a key role in local staff development.

8. That the individual teacher must be actively involved in determining the criteria by which he or she will be evaluated and by whom.
9. That colleges are seriously interested in preparing better teachers and do feel obligated to improve the quality of local inservice programs.

The results so far are not terribly impressive but we are satisfied with them because we believe we have used the best approach and have now achieved the wholesome climate so necessary for change -- trust, cooperation and local initiative.

I'm not going to bore you with the details of how our certification regulations have made these results possible but I do want to emphasize that for us, in Vermont we would not even be talking about PBTE or CBTE if we hadn't adopted new and flexible certification procedures.

Here is what we have --

1. Initial certification --

   Graduates of state approved teacher education programs who have demonstrated identified basic competencies for beginning teachers and who are recommended for certification by their college. The approval process requires colleges to produce evidence that programs are competency based.

2. Certification renewal --

   At all levels of certification the teacher must be recommended as one who has demonstrated the competencies identified as basic to specific tasks that are expected to be performed, according to her job description.

3. Inservice training programs with authorized local certification privileges.

4. Individualized self-evaluation programs at the local level leading to personal professional growth based on specific competencies.
5. Teacher governance at all levels of the process.
6. Growing college commitment to the inservice education of teachers.
7. A cooperative and collaborative relationship among colleges, school districts and the State Department of Education.

I can give you specific examples of these results, if you are interested, but I think I will reserve this for the time that is left for questions. I would prefer to spend a small amount of time describing the conditions and environment that made these things possible and will continue to contribute to future progress.

First, it is the conviction that not only could teacher performance be evaluated and teacher competencies determined, but that this had to be done in the face of the growing public demand for accountability in the spending of the tax dollar. We reject as inane, ridiculous and retarded, the anguished cries of such experts as Dean Griffis of New York University and Albert Shanker who protested that performance based teacher education and certification must wait until we had an adequate theoretical base and more research and experimentation. We moved forward on the premise that it was not difficult to distinguish between good teaching and fair teaching and between good teaching and poor teaching and that the best judges were the teachers themselves. We were and are in agreement with the opinion expressed by Fred Hechinger in the Saturday Review of last May, when he said "having at long last been persuaded that teaching is a profession entitled to professional salaries and perquisities, the public is not likely to feel kindly toward a confession that the professionals know no more than laymen about their profession's dos and don'ts."

As a result of our becoming a member of the Multi-state Consortium on Performance Based Teacher Education, 2 1/2 years ago, we soon realized that we would be smothered with the opinions, data and recommendations of experts from all over the country. We knew that these valuable sources could become a negative force if improperly used. Therefore, we have based our efforts on local determination believing that the individual teacher, if given the opportunity to look at herself in relation to her assigned tasks, could determine her strengths and weaknesses and through the process of self-evaluation move to a point of maturity and competence that would lead to a self-proclaimed desire to improve in those areas where there was a self-recognized inadequacy or deficiency in competence. Peer evaluation, student evaluation and supervisor evaluation would in most cases come as a second step. The use of materials from AACTE and other productive agencies in the performance based teacher education movement would then become of more value after the teacher had taken the first steps in self-evaluation, where she was playing an active role in determining how and by whom evaluation would be made.

Secondly, we were not too concerned about progress at the pre-service level because we had a fairly high degree of faith in our colleges, in that they were anxious to move towards performance based teacher education and were capable of developing and implementing these programs. We knew that we had the muscle to force this and that we could use it if it was necessary through the program approval process. We are tactfully and discreetly using this muscle now and may do so with less discretion in the coming months. However, the colleges have responded in a most encouraging way, perhaps persuaded to some extent by the present teacher shortage.

At the present and in the foreseeable future we are and will be facing the following issues: --

1. How to deal with the negative and inhibiting features of state teacher association efforts to control the profession.
2. How to deal with the negative and inhibiting features of unionism.
3. How to deal with teacher concern that PBTE is a sneaky way to establish merit pay.
4. How to provide more assistance to school districts that are developing local PBTE programs.
5. How to bring college teacher educators closer to the scene of action -- the public school classroom.
6. Is teacher education to be considered vocational education and is there a future role for the small program typical of many private colleges?
7. How to have classroom teachers accept a responsibility in the preparation of teachers.

At a recent seminar for private college t[illegible]er educators, I asked the following questions:

1. Why don't you get out of the teacher education business? You are no longer needed! You are not equipped to do the job that has to be done for the 1970s, 80s and 90s!
2. How can you justify your existence in teacher education if you can't meet the demands <u>now</u> imposed on teacher preparation agencies, let alone future demands?

   e.g. - a full year practicum; competency based programs; follow-up of graduates; the changing roles of teachers and active involvement in inservice programs.

3. Why should liberal arts colleges be involved in vocational education?

   Isn't that what teacher education really is?

4. Will your institution grant full academic credit for a year's internship as a teacher?

5. Why not require your students to pay a full year's tuition to a school district for the opportunity to intern under a master teacher?

6. Why not farm out your teacher trainees to the State Colleges and the University for the year of the practicum in exchange for their students who want your expertise?

7. Do you have any idea what competencies teachers will need in the 1980s?

Please don't take those questions out of context and consider them as my judgment of private college efforts in teacher education. I was asked by the colleges to be provocative and help them to examine their future mission.

As a matter of fact, I believe the Universities and State Colleges might very well ask themselves these same questions.

Maybe we ought to give serious thought to placing teacher education completely within the framework of the public school system.

This would mean a liberal arts graduate would be required to pay for a full year's internship (5th yr.). Every school system would be required to have a teacher education program and all the teacher educators employed by higher education institutions would compete for staff positions at the local level. They might even be selected on the basis of competence!

It's only a thought but it could become an issue in Vermont. Decreasing enrollments, inflation, teacher surplus, financial austerity and accountability are factors that loom very large in Vermont and they are not considered myths or sacred cows.

The Vermont voter is still an independent cuss and it seems that this characteristic is contagious because outlanders frequently out-Vermont the Vermonters.